

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claim 5 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims remaining in contention are as follows:

Claim 1. (Presently amended)

A tow bar for connecting a towed vehicle to a towing vehicle, the tow bar comprising:

- (a) a towing vehicle connection mechanism connected to the towing vehicle, the towing vehicle connection mechanism defining a fore-to-aft oriented towing vehicle axis that is operatively fixed relative to the towing vehicle and to the towing vehicle connection mechanism;
- (b) a towed vehicle connection mechanism connected to the towed vehicle, the towed vehicle connection mechanism defining a horizontal transversely- oriented towed vehicle axis that is operatively fixed relative to the towed vehicle and to the towed vehicle connection mechanism; and
- (c) an interconnecting mechanism connecting the towing vehicle connection mechanism to the towed vehicle connection mechanism, the interconnecting mechanism defining:
 - (1) an interconnection central point, and
 - (2) an interconnection vertical axis spaced rearwardly from the

interconnection central point; and wherein the interconnecting mechanism includes:

- (3) a spherically-shaped ball member having a radius and a ball member center point; and
 - (4) a body member having a main cavity with a main cavity center point and a radius of curvature, which is slightly greater than the radius of the ball member, and
 - (5) wherein the ball member is rotatively captured within the body member with the ball member center point and the main cavity center point coinciding with the interconnection central point; and
- (d) wherein the interconnecting mechanism is configured and structured to accommodate substantially all pitch and roll movements, including any and all combinations thereof, between the towing vehicle axis and the towed vehicle axis, at and about the interconnection central point; and wherein the interconnecting mechanism is further configured and structured to accommodate substantially all yaw movements, between the towing vehicle axis and the towed vehicle axis, at and about the interconnection vertical axis.

Claim 2. (Original)

The tow bar as described in claim 1, wherein the towing vehicle connection mechanism includes a hitching mechanism which is structured and configured to be inserted and secured in a conventional receiver hitch of the towing vehicle, wherein the hitching mechanism is affixed to the interconnecting mechanism.

Claim 3. (Original)

The tow bar as described in claim 1, wherein the towed vehicle connection mechanism includes at least one bracket secured to the towed vehicle.

Claim 4. (Original)

The tow bar as described in claim 1, further including a latching mechanism structured and configured to secure the interconnecting mechanism in a stowed configuration.

Claim 5. (cancelled)

Claim 6. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim 5 1, wherein the body member includes:

- (a) an upper body portion having a downwardly-facing, partially hemispherically-shaped upper cavity with a radius of curvature, which is slightly greater than the radius of the ball member, and a center of curvature;
- (b) a lower body portion having an upwardly-facing, partially hemispherically-shaped lower cavity with a radius of curvature, which is identical to the radius of curvature of the upper cavity of the upper portion, and a center of curvature; and
- (c) fastening means; and
- (d) wherein assembly of the upper body portion, the lower body portion and the ball member with the fastening means forms the main cavity wherein the center of curvature of the upper cavity of the upper body portion, the center of curvature of the lower cavity of the lower body portion, and the ball member center point all coincide with the interconnection central point, rotatively capturing the ball member therein.

Claim 7. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim 6 1 wherein, after assembly with the fastening means, the upper body portion abuts the lower body portion along a plane that passes through the main cavity center point.

Claim 8. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim 6 1 wherein the interconnecting mechanism further includes:

- (a) a slot having a slot width, the slot being cooperatively formed by assembly of the body member from the upper body portion and the lower body portion;
- (b) a shaft member having a forward end affixed to the towing vehicle connection mechanism, a rearward end affixed to the ball member, and a diameter which is slightly smaller than the slot width, the shaft member extending forwardly from the ball member through the slot.

Claim 9. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim 8 1, wherein

- (a) the shaft member includes a transversely-oriented disc which separates the shaft member into a proximal end and a distal end; and
- (b) the ball member comprises
 - (1) a proximal portion having a partial bore or throughbore having a diameter dimensioned to fit snugly around the proximal end of the shaft member, and
 - (2) a distal portion having a throughbore having a diameter dimensioned to fit snugly around the distal end of the shaft member; and
- (c) wherein the spherical shape of the ball member is provided by assembly of the

proximal portion of the ball member onto the proximal end of the shaft member and by assembly of the distal portion of the ball member onto the proximal end of the shaft member with the transversely-oriented disc sandwiched between the proximal and distal portions of the ball member.

Claim 10. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim ~~8~~ 1 wherein the interconnecting mechanism further includes:

- (a) a rearwardly-projecting towbar arm connector affixed to the body member; and
- (b) at least one towbar arm having a forward end and a rear end, the forward end thereof being pivotally connected to the towbar arm connector and the rear end thereof being connected to the towed vehicle connection mechanism.

Claim 11. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim ~~10~~ 1 wherein the at least one towbar arm includes two towbar arms, each having a forward end and a rear end, wherein the rear ends thereof are operatively spaced apart and connected to the towed vehicle connection mechanism and wherein the forward ends thereof are not spaced apart and are pivotally connected to the towbar arm connector to pivot about the interconnection vertical axis.

Claim 12. (Presently amended)

The tow bar as described in claim 8 1, further comprising:

- (a) a latching mechanism structured and configured to secure the interconnecting mechanism in a stowed configuration, the latching mechanism including:
 - (1) a first latching device connected to the towbar arm connector, and
 - (2) a second latching device affixed to the towing vehicle connection mechanism; and
- (b) wherein, as the body member is rotated about the ball member to displace the slot along the shaft member wherein the towbar arm connector is disposed in a generally upright orientation, the first latching device and the second latching device cooperatively and releasably secure the interconnecting mechanism in the stowed configuration.

Claims 13-21. (Previously cancelled)

Claim 22. (Original)

A tow bar for connecting a towed vehicle to a towing vehicle, the tow bar comprising:

- (a) a towing vehicle connection mechanism connected to the towing vehicle, the towing vehicle connection mechanism
 - (1) including a hitching mechanism structured and configured to be received

by a conventional receiver hitch of the towing vehicle, and

- (2) defining a fore-to-aft oriented towing vehicle axis which is operatively fixed relative to the towing vehicle and to the towing vehicle connection mechanism;
- (b) a towed vehicle connection mechanism connected to the towed vehicle, the towed vehicle connection mechanism
 - (1) including at least one bracket attached to the towed vehicle, and
 - (2) defining a horizontal transversely-oriented towed vehicle axis which is operatively fixed relative to the towed vehicle and to the towed vehicle connection mechanism;
- (c) an interconnecting mechanism connecting the towing vehicle connection mechanism to the towed vehicle connection mechanism, the interconnecting mechanism defining an interconnection central point, defining an interconnection vertical axis spaced rearwardly from the interconnection central point, and including:
 - (1) a spherically-shaped ball member having a radius and a ball member center point,
 - (2) a body member having a main cavity with a main cavity center point and a radius of curvature, which is slightly greater than the radius of the ball member, the body member further including:

- (A) an upper body portion with a downwardly-facing, partially hemispherically-shaped upper cavity having a radius of curvature, which is slightly greater than the radius of the ball member, and a center of curvature,
 - (B) a lower body portion with an upwardly-facing, partially hemispherically-shaped lower cavity having a radius of curvature, which is identical to the radius of curvature of the upper cavity of the upper body portion, and a center of curvature, and
 - (C) fastening means, and
 - (D) wherein assembly of the upper body portion, the lower body portion and the ball member with the fastening means forms the main cavity of the body member wherein the center of curvature of the upper cavity of the upper body portion, the center of curvature of the lower cavity of the lower body portion, and the ball member center point all coincide with the main cavity center point, rotatively capturing the ball member therein; and wherein the upper body portion abuts the lower body portion along a plane that passes through the main cavity center point,
- (3) a slot having a slot width, the slot being cooperatively formed by the upper body portion in conjunction with the lower body portion,

- (4) a shaft member having a forward end affixed to the towing vehicle connection mechanism, a rearward end affixed to the ball member, and a diameter which is slightly smaller than the slot width, wherein the shaft member extends forwardly from the ball member through the slot,
 - (5) a rearwardly-projecting towbar arm connector affixed to the body member, and
 - (6) a pair of towbar arms, each having a forward end and a rear end, wherein the rear ends thereof are operatively spaced apart and connected to the towed vehicle connection mechanism, and the forward ends thereof are not spaced apart and are movably connected to the towbar arm connector to pivot about the interconnection vertical axis; and
- (d) a latching mechanism structured and configured to secure the interconnecting mechanism in a stowed configuration, the latching mechanism including:
- (1) a first latching device connected to the towbar arm connector, and
 - (2) a second latching device affixed to the towing vehicle connection mechanism, and
 - (3) wherein, as the body member is rotated about the ball member to displace the slot along the shaft member to dispose the towbar arm connector in a generally upright orientation, the first latching device in conjunction with the second latching device releasably secures the interconnecting

mechanism in the stowed configuration; and

- (e) wherein the interconnecting mechanism is configured and structured to accommodate substantially all pitch and roll movements including any and all combinations thereof, between the towing vehicle axis and the towed vehicle axis, at and about the interconnection central point; and wherein the interconnecting mechanism is further configured and structured to accommodate substantially all yaw movements, between the towing vehicle axis and the towed vehicle axis, at and about the interconnection vertical axis.

Claim 23. (Previously cancelled)